



Testimony, HB 4747  
House Regulatory Reform Committee  
March 24, 2010

My name is Arlene Gorelick, and I am President of the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan. The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan, founded in 1948, is the only statewide non-profit organization that focuses entirely on seizure disorders. Our mission is *The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan will ensure that people with seizures are able to participate in all life experiences; and will prevent, control and cure epilepsy through services, education, advocacy, and research.* The Foundation is a separately incorporated affiliate of the national Epilepsy Foundation.

The Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan opposes House Bill 4747, which would remove the protections of mandatory motorcycle helmets.

About 25 percent of all cases of epilepsy are attributed to some kind of injury to the head. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of head injuries--about 50-60 percent in most studies. Nationally, about 5,000 new cases of epilepsy are attributed to head injury each year.

Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes. Riders without helmets are 40 percent more likely to sustain a fatal head injury. A motorcyclist is 16 times more likely to die in a crash than an automobile driver. Statistics show that in states where helmets are not required, only 28 to 40 percent of motorcyclists wear them. Unhelmeted motorcyclists are over three times as likely to suffer a brain injury when compared to those motorcyclists that wear helmets.

Studies show that when helmets are voluntary, younger, inexperienced drivers will not wear them, thereby placing them at risk.

The evidence in support of helmet use is overwhelming. Every reputable safety research organization in the world supports the use of helmets as a way to reduce injury, death, and economic costs resulting from brain trauma.

For these reasons, the Epilepsy Foundation of Michigan opposes HB4747. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee on these important issues.